



Joint Field Office
75 N. Fair Oaks Ave., 3rd Floor
Pasadena, CA 91103

FEMA

November 30, 2007

DR-1731-CA NR-54

FEMA/OES: 626-431-3178

BARTF: 909-777-3005

Recovery News

OFFICIALS URGE FIRE-AFFECTED CALIFORNIANS TO PREPARE FOR WINTER STORMS

PASADENA, Calif. — As wet weather arrives, state and federal officials urge Californians affected by the 2007 fires to take precaution against flooding and landslides that may occur as a result of fire-scorched landscapes.

“The rain is just beginning; now is the time to prepare for the possibility of wintertime flooding and erosion,” said Henry Renteria, director of the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (OES) and state coordinating officer for the fire recovery effort. “Local, state and federal officials have been doing everything possible to stabilize the burn areas, but the risk from post-fire hazards can never be completely eliminated.”

“I urge Californians living in and below the burn areas to take steps to reduce their risk of death, injury and property loss from flooding, mudflow and debris flow,” said Federal Coordinating Officer Mike Hall of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Severe storm events can cause flash floods, contaminate the drinking water supply, disrupt electrical service, damage homes and contents, and threaten lives. Natural disasters such as fires elevate these risks by creating sudden damage to the watershed which increases potential for soil erosion and runoff. If the storm is intense or lasts a long time, the risk of flooding, debris torrents and debris flow increases.

The coalition of local, state and federal agencies has begun using a report from the Burned Area Emergency Response teams to implement emergency stabilization activities. The efforts focus on short-term actions to reduce the potential for flooding and mudslides within burned areas. However, state and federal officials encourage residents to take additional steps to reduce the risk of death, injury and property losses from flooding, mudflows and landslides.

Officials urge the public to prepare by taking the following actions before the rain begins:

- Teach children not to play in or near streams, ponds or other flood-prone areas.
- Assemble emergency supply kits for your home and place of work including the following items:
 - Flashlights with extra batteries
 - Sandbags
 - Plastic sheeting
 - Plywood, lumber
- Store emergency building materials away from potential flooding areas.

-more-

Page 2 of 2 – Officials Urge Californians To Prepare

- Store a seven day supply of water (at least one gallon per person per day) in clean, closed containers.
- Maintain fuel in your cars; electrical outages might make gas pumps inoperable.
- Identify safe routes to high ground from your home and work, but be prepared to follow the instructions of local emergency officials.
- Check with your local public works, building or planning departments to determine whether you live in an area subject to flooding, or visit www.floodsmart.gov.
- Clear debris and overgrowth from onsite drainage facilities.
- Work with neighbors to solve potential drainage problems and to avoid diverting debris onto their properties. Consult a licensed civil engineer if you are in doubt.

Damage and other flooding losses usually are not covered by homeowner's insurance policies. However, FEMA offers flood insurance through its National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Contact your insurance agent or call NFIP at 1-800-638-6620 for more information. Additional information about emergency preparedness is available at www.oes.ca.gov.

FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates overall state-agency response to major disasters in support of local government. OES is also responsible for maintaining the State Emergency Plan and coordinating California's preparedness, mitigation and recovery efforts.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, you should call FEMA toll-free at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 1-800-462-7585.

#